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CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

OLUME 15 NUMBER 1

DITORIALS

'hat Can We Do?

It has never been easy for men of any age measure both their strength and their akness accurately. The relation of God's ovidence to human freedom and respon-ility is an age-old problem in Christian eology which some theologies have solved th an emphasis upon divine determinism ich annulled human freedom, and oth- with an emphasis upon human freedom ich obscured the limits of man's power.

This problem seems to have become in-asingly difficult for modern secular ciety. Our modern culture is divided be-een those who think that human history oves by inexorable forces beyond the con-l of the human will and those who think at man is just about to become the com-ete master of both his individual and his llective destiny. A rather amusing debate tween the voluntaristic and determinis- versions of the modern creed has just en presented in the study of the anthro-logist Leslie A. White, entitled "The ience of Culture." White quotes a psy-ologist who believes that if only we had ent as much on a scheme of international ucation as we spent on the atomic bomb could have solved the moral and polit-l problem which the bomb created and mbolized. He rightly believes this vision man rising to universal community by simple scheme of education to be ab-rd. In place of it he offers an interpre-tation of modern history equally absurd. This alternative interpretation grows out of the new cultural determinism of modern anthropology. The anthropologists, who only yesterday were telling us that there were no significant racial distinctions in the human race, today have come to the conclusion that the cultural distinctions between various peoples are so great that it is practically impossible to speak any longer of a human race. The cultural forces in a given community are conceived of as having a practically autonomous force without reference to human agents. Thus Mr. White believes that there is no educational program which can rise above the characteristic presuppositions of the Russian culture or the western culture. Conflict between them is therefore an ineluctable fate from which we cannot escape. Primitive men, declares Professor White, once thought that they could control the weather but "as man's knowledge and understanding in meteorology grew, his illusion of power and control was dissipated." Therefore "the belief that man can work his will upon nature and man alike if only he has the right formulas" is like primitive magic, except that today it is called science. Professor White counsels us to bow before history as primitive men finally learned to accept the weather.

Unfortunately for the analogy, men actually have increased their power over nature on the one hand and they are on the other

hand more responsible for historical destiny than they are for the weather. These new anthropological determinists have forgotten that man is an agent, as well as a product of every historical culture, just as the simple voluntarists have forgotten that man remains a creature of the historical process even if he increases his power as an agent in it.

The voluntarists of today are busy constructing schemes for world government. Deeply conscious of the necessity of a wider community some of them think they can construct it merely by the power of a rational constitutional structure. They have forgotten that laws do not gain automatic obedience. The majesty of a community must stand behind the majesty of particular laws; and the global community is lacking. Others, conscious of the weakness of law, would create an international community by the authority of an international police force.

They do not, however, tell us how they would prompt the sovereign nations to empty themselves of all their power in order that the power of an international police force might have dominion over them. Nor do they seem to sense the peril of tyranny in an international authority which consists primarily of police power. All of these schemes overestimate the power of the human will and the purity of the human mind in history.

The determinists on the other hand speak of an "inevitable" war. They want to risk the destruction of every bridge between ourselves and Russia because they are certain that the Russian dogma will never decay and the Russian fanaticism will never be abated. They want therefore to be sure of victory in a war which they regard as "inevitable." We are living in a very tragic period of history. But even now nothing is inevitable. It is difficult to see how, if a war breaks out, it can be prevented from being an atomic one. But the conflict itself is certainly not inevitable. There are, in fact, better prospects today of avoiding war than at any time in the past four years. The Russian dogma may not change; but its power to penetrate into the rest of the world may well have been arrested. The Russian tyranny in Russia may be beyond successful challenge; but its dominion over the satellites may well come to an end. Only creative statesmanship on our part can reduce the probability of war; and this statesmanship must exercise a freedom and a sense of responsibility which obviously transgresses the bounds which our anthropological determinists have set for human action. On the other hand it must be mindful of the limits of the fiat of the human will which the proponents of world government are constantly transgressing.

The Quaker Way

In our dealings with Russia it is fairly clear that the peace of the world must be preserved for some decades to come by the preponderance of power in the west. It must be understood, however, that the power of which we are speaking is not merely military power. It is in fact not primarily military power. The Russians are challenging us primarily by moral and political means and our defence must be primarily moral and economic. If we can preserve and extend the moral health of the non-communist world we will preserve the preponderance of power. In an actual conflict military might is, of course, the *ultima ratio*. But the power by which conflict is avoided is primarily non-military.

This method of preserving peace must not, of course, exclude continued contact with Russia. We must preserve the bridge between ourselves and Russia at almost any cost. But there are approaches to the present issue which make it appear that it might be easy to dissolve the Russian intransigence, if only we tried hard enough. Take for instance the Quaker proposals, recently published by the Yale University Press, entitled "The United Nations and the Soviet Union, Some Quaker Proposals for Peace." In this document,

hich is a good deal more realistic than ost pacifist approaches to the problems of ır era, the chasm between ourselves and ıe Russians is nevertheless constantly un- erestimated by suggestions that it could e bridged if only we tried hard enough. hus we read: "In the light of Quaker xperience in dealing with human beings many different nationalities and in all arts of the world we believe that an exten- on of opportunities for personal relations etween the Russians and Americans could enefit both peoples. Neither has a monop- y on either virtue or vice." There is first all a certain Pharisaism in that phrase n the light of Quaker experience." The uaker experience has indeed been rich. ut even we who are, in their estimate, sec- nd-rate Christians know that such per- nal contacts are valuable. We also know at neither people has a monopoly on her virtue or vice. The Russian people e, in fact, a wonderful people. But this ntence makes it appear that the primary fficulty lies in misunderstandings between e peoples, which is not a fact. Further- ore it implies that we could establish ch personal contacts if we tried resolutely ough. Former Ambassador Bedell Smith s just reported that he never ceased offer- g the Russians exchange scholarships, ex- ange professorships, and that he tried ery other strategy for breaking the moral lation of the people. But all has been no avail. The Russian dictatorship can- t afford these interchanges. It keeps up constant barrage of propaganda which akes the non-communist world appear to perishing in a mire of misery, and there- re it cannot afford to let the Russian ople discover the truth. Bedell Smith ls us how difficult it was for the dictator- ip to erase from the minds of the soldiers eir sense of contrast between what the opaganda had said about the western rld and what they actually found.

We are told furthermore that both na- ns "claim their governments to be demo- atic," although the Soviet definition of mocracy has tended to emphasize "gov- ernment for the people" whereas the United States has placed emphasis upon "govern- ment by the people." This idea that only a semantic difficulty separates us also has been tried recently by a UNESCO project for the definition of "fundamental con- cepts." The truth in such statements is obvious enough. But they are also pious frauds, if they are meant to imply that a little more semantic accuracy or a little more common experience will teach one side to add "for the people" and the other side "by the people."

That is the kind of debate which is actu- ally going on between socialist Europe and capitalist America, we hope for the en- lightenment of both sides. But the Rus- sians are having no part in the debate. They seal off every organ of communica- tion which would make an exchange of in- terpretations possible. Furthermore, a defi- nition of Russian "democracy" which does not give a hint of the tragedy involved in the cynical corruption of the original Marx- ist democratic dream is misleading. It would even be misleading if it were as- sumed that the corruption were merely a Stalinist aberration and if it did not reveal that the degeneration from the dem- ocratic dream to the tyrannical realities is derived from serious miscalculations in the Marxist interpretations of the human sit- uation. It is precisely because Russian communism legitimatizes a corrupt politics by utopian illusions that it is so dangerous to the world and so blinding to its devotees.

The Quaker proposals go on blandly to offer all kinds of advice on specific issues without revealing how difficult it is to fol- low the advice. Thus we are told: "United States policy should have as its objective the conclusion of a general peace treaty with a unified Germany, the inclusion of Germany in the United Nations and its related agencies, and the establishment of all possible safeguards to insure that Ger- many's strategic position between the east and west will not result in increased ten- sions between the two power blocs." As if this bland solution of a vexing problem did

not obscure the depth of the whole tragic situation in which we are involved. The Russians will not let go of their part of Germany if they do not get in return the dominance over the whole of Germany. That is why they refused a unified military control of Germany at the end of the war. Nor could we let go of our part of Germany, if we thought that it might be subject to communist infiltration. After Russia's breaking of every agreement intended to guarantee a non-communist but united front government in Poland, Rumania, and Hungary, we must obviously be wary of any similar agreements. This proposed solution therefore throws no light whatever upon what we have to do in the German question, any more than the general advice helps to solve the total question.

It is natural enough in tragic times that people should be tempted to seek for ways out of a great dilemma which reveal their inability to measure the proportions of the dilemma. But we hope that it will not be regarded as particularly "Christian" to close one eye because the reality which breaks upon the sight of both eyes is too terrible to contemplate.

Communism in China

The communists have not yet taken over the whole of China, but undoubtedly they will do so. There is no moral, political or military strength in the Nationalist government which can prevent it. It is unfortunate that we supported the Nationalist government longer than we should have, and longer incidentally than Secretary Marshall intended. We were driven to our abortive support of this government by "Christian" statesmen, such as Congressman Judd, who persuaded Congress that a government which had long since lost the moral respect of the Chinese people could be saved by American dollars.

No one can divine what the future of China will be. Christians in China are divided between those who appraise the communist character of the Chinese government realistically and those who gloss over its totalitarian character and embrace it as "Christian" because it promises a "peoples' democracy." We may be grateful that Christian missionaries and missionary societies have rightly concluded that no Christian enterprise will be forsaken in China unless the communist government makes it quite impossible to carry on. But there are those who would draw a sharp line between this policy of the missionaries and that which they would have our government follow. They want the government to have nothing to do with the new government of China, to oppose its request for a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations, and to withdraw all American officials from China.

Considering the necessary rigor of our opposition to communism in Europe, it may seem logical to adopt the same rigor in China. But logic is the bane of political wisdom. The line against communism in Europe must be rigorously held. But no line can be held in China. Communist victory is a reality. Furthermore, it offers no foreseeable strategic threat as in Europe. What is more to the point, however, is that communism in the whole of Asia is created by two great forces, the hopes and fears of the abjectly poor and the resentments of "colored" peoples who are in revolt either against their colonial status or against the moral arrogance of the white man. Communism in Asia is primarily nationalism in disguise.

We would be fools indeed to regard China as merely an aspect of the Russian problem. We would be fools thereby to sacrifice the advantages which we hold in China by reason of a century of friendship with the Chinese people. Nothing will play into the hands of the communists so much as complete American intransigence. One has the uneasy feeling that incidents such as the arrest of our Consul in Mukden are meant primarily to goad us into such an attitude. We must not promise that a policy of patience will change the character of Chinese communism. It is the same

octrinaire communism with which we are quainted throughout the world. Chi-se Christian leaders who think otherwise ill soon find themselves in a sorry plight either disillusionment or moral degra-tion. But on the other hand it is not kely that a nationalism which operates nder the cover of communism will tol-ate the kind of Russian interference to nich the Russians are driven by their own gma. Let us give the Russian "interna-onalism" a chance to reveal the cloven oof of its Russianism. In that case the inese reaction may well be similar to ito's. Borodin and his Russian cohorts perienced it in 1926. Let it be Russia d not ourselves which wounds the pride a nation. We can afford to wait. No e can promise that Mao will be a Tito. is in fact impossible to promise obvious vantages anywhere in the world today as e consequence of a right policy. But it n hardly be denied that it is right to con-er the pride of a nation in the process rebirth as well as the aberrations which expresses in that rebirth. If it is right do so, the historical consequences will timately also be right.

nd Reform in Italy

Two newspaper items of recent date, re-rting on land reform in Italy, reveal a rtain poignancy not usually found in po-ical news. Premier DeGasperi, speaking a section of Italy in which the govern-nt's program of land reform would soon d to the expropriation of large estates, pressed the hope that our "American nds will not think us too revolutionary." e peasants, on the other hand, who were scribed as living in most abject poverty, eived the Premier's news with little en-siasm because "they had been disap-nted so often in the past that they would ieve in the promised land distribution y when it happens."

n the same week a touching story came of Italy of Father Francesco Parise in little village of Punta D'Ella Castella. He a band of 180 men, all the able bodied men of the village, who appropriated for their own use a few miserable acres of land from the estate of the Baron Baracco. Baron Baracco, a typical Roman aristocrat and absentee landlord, owns 8,000 acres of which only 2,000 are cultivated. His peasants earn about fifty cents per day and are assured only about forty days per year of seasonal work. It is this abject agrarian poverty which has produced more communistic sentiment in Italy than the poverty of the industrial masses. The lowly priest justified his leadership in the project of "land-grabbing" by which many of the desperately poor in Italy are anticipating the government's land reform, as follows: "I know the law. I think I also know what justice is. I also know that they are not always the same."

After Father Parise's adventure he was summoned to his Bishop at Crotone. The Bishop informed him that he would be transferred to another parish. While the men were cheerfully sowing wheat upon the land which they had "grabbed," the Padre, with tears in his eyes, prepared to leave the parish he loved. We do not pretend to know whether the Bishop of Crotone expresses the views of the Vatican. But there is evidence that both the Vatican and "our American friends" have looked askance at any land reform program sufficiently revolutionary to be of avail. There is no more abject poverty than the agrarian poverty of Italy and no more corrupt landlordism than that of the Roman aristocracy. There is no dyke in the defences of western civilization where the floods of communism could inundate us with greater justification than at this point. And no seats of power are more interested to prevent this than Washington and the Vatican. Yet it seems that these are the two centers of power which have retarded land reform. Or could it be that Premier DeGasperi expresses concern about the opinion of his "American friends" because he is trying to find an excuse for the tardiness of his great Catholic party in its program of land reform?

(Continued on Page 33)

EXISTENTIALISM AND RELIGIOUS SOCIALISM

By PAUL TILLICH

I.

The question how the Religious Socialist movement is related to existential philosophy is meaningful only if Existentialism is taken in the large sense of the word. Today, after the French existentialists have made the movement fashionable and widely discussed, a philosopher like Sartre has become its typical representative. Certainly one is still aware of the fact that Sartre is a pupil of Heidegger, that beside Heidegger stands Jaspers, that both of them are dependent on Kierkegaard, and that beyond this Jaspers is strongly influenced by depth psychology and Heidegger by Nietzsche and Bergson. But one is almost completely unaware of the analogy between Kierkegaard's and Marx's attack on Hegel and of the terminological similarity of their descriptions of the human situation. One is further unaware of the significance of the second period of Romanticism, represented e.g. by the later Schelling and many others, for the development of existential thinking.

These facts establish a much larger concept of existentialism than the one used at the present time.* It is *one* line of thought which runs from the catastrophe of Hegel's system (about 1840) to our day. It has been asked whether this large concept of existentialism does not embrace too much, consequently losing a significant meaning. To this we answer that not "everything" is called existentialism, as some critics of the larger concept claim, but the word is applied to the philosophy of a number of people who launched a passionate protest against the prevailing ideas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The philosophers of the schools went quite different ways. Neo-kantianism and neo-hegelianism on the one side, positivism and naturalism on the other side, determined the philosophical and theological scene. Existential philosophy is a revolt against "everything," namely, the traditional forms of idealistic and realistic thinking.

Religious Socialism has formulated ideas which express the same revolt. Therefore the question of the relation of the two is not only justified, but it can lead to important insights into the character both of existentialism and of Religious Socialism.

II.

The first point of agreement between existentialism and Religious Socialism is their interpretation of human existence. The term existence points to a conflict between what man essentially is (and therefore ought to be) and what he actually is. While for Hegel, and for his predecessors and followers as well, man's existence is the necessary and adequate expression of his essence, the existentialist opposition tries to show that existence is the contradiction and disruption of what man essentially is. In Sartre's phrase that man's essence is his existence the anti-Hegelian pole is reached. Here man's essence is reduced to undetermined freedom. No norm, no criterion is left, except the dictum that man is whatever he decides to make himself.

The situation of existence is analyzed by all existential philosophers in terms which can be brought under the headings of finitude and estrangement. "Man is finite" is in existential philosophy not a simple statement; it is a challenge of all forms of idealism in which an identity between the

*Cf. my article "Existential Philosophy" in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, January, 1944.

finite and the finite is presupposed, as g. in Hegel. In the existentialist view the ite is divorced from the infinite. The ner awareness of our finitude is anxiety, t the fear of something concrete against ich we could fight with courage, but the ntinuous conscious or unconscious pres- ce of the annihilating power of the threat non-being. Any attempt to overcome is situation will be frustrated. The fin- being will be ruined if he tries to be- me infinite in being or thinking. Man is bject to want and desire, to suffering and ssion. He has objects outside himself d he himself is an object to others. gainst the idealistic assertion of the iden- y between subject and object, between nking and being, existentialism shows ir separation in existence. Here Sartre's alysis is most valuable. He shows how ry man, against his passionate resistance, comes an object for every other man in ry encounter. Existence is the con- uous loss of freedom within a continu- s struggle for freedom. Existence means ng made an object amongst objects, a ng amongst things; it means being anged from true humanity and trying esist this destiny desperately and vainly.

At this point the line of existentialism ich comes from Kierkegaard over Hei- gger to Sartre reveals its profound rela- nship with the line which comes from rx and which has been taken up by ligious Socialism. Marx describes the nation of "becoming an object" in terms estrangement through the economic and ial situation of industrial society. Man comes a facility, a wave, a quantity of rking-power. He becomes dehumanized, orced and estranged from his true hu- nity. Socialism is the revolt against s structure of capitalist society. In so- lism man's essential being, though dis- ted and almost lost, revolts against the ses of this loss. The causes are struc- al, implied in the system itself, and refore independent of the good or bad l of any social group. Socialism is the t of man for his creative freedom against the forces of industrial society which trans- form him into a thing.

It is by far the greatest tragedy of our century that this fight has produced a polit- ical system in which man's creative free- dom is even more lost than in the economic system over which it has triumphed. Re- ligious Socialism tried to prevent this de- velopment of the socialist idea, not only in communism but also in socialism. It tried to stress the existential elements in the thought of the early Marx over against the materialistic *and* idealistic elements in the later Marx and in most of his secular fol- lowers. Religious Socialism fully accepted Marx's existential analysis of the human situation, but it rejected those remnants of "bourgeois" thinking in Marx which make man either materialistically a thing amongst things (economic determinism) or ideal- istically a subject with infinite freedom (political utopianism). Existentialism and Religious Socialism, agree that man is neither the first nor will he ever be the second, but that he is "finite freedom" falling into and fighting against estrange- ment from his true being.

III.

The human situation, as seen in existen- tial philosophy, implies the finitude and self-estrangement of human thought. The existential philosopher knows that he is bound to the existential situation in his thought as much as in his life. Truth is not something which can be found through detached observation. Both the idealist and the naturalist are challenged by exis- tentialism because they try to escape the destiny of being finite with respect to truth. The naturalist, of course, empha- sizes the approximative character of all knowledge, the possibility of error, and the necessity of continual verification. He seems to be fully aware of the finitude of human thought. But he is not. He does not see that the method of experimental verification can be applied only to a rather abstract level of knowledge, but not to the level of truth that matters for our very

existence. If the latter is sought, theoretical detachment must be replaced by existential participation. The passionate subjectivity of which Kierkegaard speaks is the right attitude towards existential truth.

This means also a rejection of the idealistic attempt to escape finitude in thought. Idealism assumes that it is possible to look over the whole of truth from a point where the finite and the infinite are identical. The idealist does not deny that the finitude of the philosopher may produce errors and limited understanding. But like the naturalist he considers this a removable weakness, removable not by a detached-calculating empiricism but by an intuitive-rational penetration into the structure of being. If we compare the two attitudes we can say that the naturalist has more insight into man's existential finitude, in life as well as in thought, while the idealist has a deeper understanding of the need of an existential participation in the truth that concerns us ultimately. But neither of them is fully aware of the consequences of the existential element in his thought.

The concept of the "existential thinker" which is central for all forms of existential philosophy appears in Marx in connection with his doctrine of ideology. According to this analytically and critically powerful doctrine the self-interpretation of human groups, religious as well as secular, is bound to their "being."* Their sociological state determines their thinking; they produce interpretations of existence which are capable of supporting their will to power and of preserving their actual power. Ideologies express the particular passions and interests of particular social groups. Truth, therefore, can be found only by a group which is not particular but universal, which represents all groups, the whole of society. This group is, according to Marx, the proletariat, or at least a vanguard of the proletariat (including some non-proletarians who have broken away from their own sociological state).

*Cf. Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge in *Ideology and Utopia.*

Religious Socialism accepted the doctrine of ideology, but in contrast to political socialism and communism, it used the critical power of the concept also against itself. It anticipated the rise of a new bureaucratic, authoritarian, and even totalitarian ideology in proletarian socialism. Because they were radically suspicious of ideology in all human groups, including their own, Religious Socialists were less disappointed by the development of the modern revolutionary movements than were the secular adherents who saw ideological distortion only in others and the true ideology only in themselves. Religious Socialism, although realizing in unity with prophetic religion the relation of truth to an extreme boundary situation, cannot identify the general human boundary situation with the extreme position of the proletariat, nor universal truth with the proletarian truth. It does not deny that in a special situation the proletariat and its interpreters are most significant for existential truth, but it adds that ultimately it is the community of the "New Being," the spiritual (not the empirical) Church, which represents universal truth on an existential basis. This opens the possibility that Religious Socialism might dismiss itself in the name of its determining principle.

IV.

There are other points at which a comparison between existentialism and Religious Socialism could be fruitful, e.g., their attitude to time and history. The centrality of time and especially of the future mode in most existentialists, the demand for an existential or concerned interpretation of history, the emphasis on action and on an active participation in history, all this is present in Religious Socialism as well as in most existential philosophers. It is a protest against the reduction of time to the dimension of space, and of history to a collection of facts without existential meaning. It is a part of the common fight against a world in which creative subjectivity is transformed into mechanical ob-

ectivity, in which men have been made nto things within a world of mere things.

Every judgment about the Existentialist novement must see it in the framework of ate industrial society. Religious Socialism, ooking at this framework, finds itself to a arge degree within it—on one of its wings, fighting a desperate battle which might well be lost as all former fights against the dehumanizing nature of our social and cultural system have been in vain. But in this fight truths have been rediscovered, truths about the human situation which cannot be lost even if the revolt of existentialism in all its forms should be frustrated.

EXISTENTIALISM

By DOROTHY EMMET

"Existentialism" is becoming something f a blessed word. From the Third Programme to the literary and theological reviews, it is constantly cropping up; and we hear reports of Existentialist lectures in rance drawing huge audiences. A colleague of mine, a Professor of French Studies, when on a recent visit to the United tates, was asked by the official at the customs whether he was going to lecture on Existentialism. When he said, "No," the fficial said, "That's all right," and passed im through without further examination.

No one would have been more surprised han the father of Existentialism if he could ave seen this progeny. For Existentialism erives from Kierkegaard's use of the word *Existenz,* to mean "existence" in the special ense in which human individuals are said o exist, and no one was more of a foreigner o "isms" and fashionable movements of hought than Kierkegaard. Working in Denmark 100 years ago, he was almost nknown except as a local eccentric in openhagen. He was a lonely free lance, oet, philosopher, theologian, pouring out is voluminous writings in a continual atempt to ask and answer the question: What does it mean to be a Christian? and o show, not without irony, that his conemporaries were asking and answering it n the wrong way.

Kierkegaard and the Hegelian Dialectic

The dominant philosophy on the continent at the time was Hegelian Idealism, and followers of this philosophy believed they had found a system in terms of which satisfactory theoretical and practical answers could be found to the main problems of human life and destiny. The leading idea of this system was that of a dialectical process of thought. When we are thinking or arguing we come to points where we seem to be up against a contradiction: one side maintains one idea, the "thesis", the other its opposite, the "antithesis". But on further examination it is sometimes possible to show that these opposing ideas are not really mutually contradictory, but complementary. By finding an idea which will include the contribution of both sides, they can be reconciled in a "higher synthesis". Of course in some kinds of argument or debate a dialectic like this is the real method of advance. But if we are always trying to show that "either-ors" can be converted into "both-ands" we can end in a series of ingenious attempts to eat our cake and have it. Also the Hegelian Dialectic was not only a logic of argument, but a metaphysical theory according to which the process of the world itself was looked on as the expression of a Thought

which moved according to this pattern of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Hence in the world when properly understood, we ought to be able to see that conflicts are always necessary stages towards creative reconciliation; that there are no exclusive choices or real alternatives.

Against all this, Kierkegaard maintained that you could have a system of ideas but not a system of existence; that thought might be full of syntheses, but life was full of choices; and that a thinker is not an incarnation of a general, absolute consciousness, but an individual subject. To the Hegelian there was a solution in each situation which was the realization of the "absolute Idea" (that is, the Thought behind the world process) in the conditions of that situation, and freedom and rationality were to be found in recognizing and accepting the necessity of that solution. But to Kierkegaard there was "an absolute qualitative distinction between God and man". He was always saying that "the absolute has gone out of life"; that people had reduced the idea of absolute perfection to something which could be achieved in the actual conditions of human life. But if we understand the limitations and frustrations inherent in our situation as finite human individuals we shall see that absolute perfection must be beyond us, and so we shall have "the edification of the thought that before God we are always in the wrong". (Readers of Reinhold Niebuhr will recognize a kinship with what he says about "impossible possibilities".)

Decision

But if there is always a break between the transcendent absolute and finite human life, and if therefore there are no completely satisfactory answers to our theoretical and practical problems, this only serves to sharpen our need to make personal choices and decisions. And these will be real choices, difficult choices between conflicting possibilities, which can never be fully justified on objective grounds. This call to make choices and decisions by which we commit ourselves is the special characteristic of human existence, and it is from this that the name "Existentialism" is derived. We become human beings by facing and assuming the responsibility for making decisions, above all in those difficult and critical situations in which there is no way of demonstrating whether we are deciding rightly, and when we have to act in faith. "How do we *know* what the will of God really is?" an earnest student once asked Father Kelly at Swanwick, and he answered, "We don't, and that's the giddy joke". To the existentialists all the more important questions we ask in trying to understand the world, as well as in seeking what we ought to do, are caught in this giddy joke. Abraham, the father of those who live by faith, should therefore be the father of us all. But it is a kind of faith which is very close to scepticism; and Existentialism may be, but is not necessarily, Christian. There are Catholic and Protestant existentialists: there were Nazi existentialists and existentialists in the Resistance Movements; and the contemporary French Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre is strongly atheistic. The need to make responsible individual decisions does not imply that everyone will decide in the same way—quite the contrary.

"Angst"

The preliminary stage leading to these different kinds of Existentialism is however the same; it is realizing what Kierkegaard called *Angest,* in German *Angst.* We have no English word which quite translates it. "Anxiety" sounds too fussy. One of Berdyaev's English translators renders it "Holy Terror", but to some of us this phrase has slightly comic associations. What the word expresses is the sense of a fundamental metaphysical insecurity; not dread of anything in particular, but the dread which comes over us if we realize that in the last resort the moral and theoretical props by which we have supported ourselves go down, and we are faced with—*Nothingness.* Some existentialists, notably Heidegger in Germany, and J.-P. Sartre,

make a great deal of this contention that the final metaphysical fact is Nothingness, and this part of their writings becomes extremely complicated. Mr. A. J. Ayer (writing in *Horizon,* July and August, 1945) has in fact called it "a systematic abuse of the verb to be". And some of us who do not share Mr. Ayer's postivist views may yet find ourselves tempted to call down on the heads of the existentialists the curses which the ancient Parmenides directed at those who tried to say that "Not-Being is".

I myself believe that it comes to something like this. When people talk about reality (especially if written "Reality") they generally mean not just that there is something which is the case, but that there is something which is important or significant. When they talk about "unreality", they mean a final sense of triviality or meaninglessness—that nothing really matters. So when existentialists speak of being faced with "Nothingness" they do not mean that whatever was the case in the world has just silently vanished away like the Snark; they mean that we come up against a final sense of meaninglessness. This comes when we see through the theories, the inherited traditions, the clichés, which had concealed our fundamental ignorance and insecurity.

Religious and Secular Existentialism

But here the religious and secular existentialists diverge. Both kinds see themselves as human beings, caught in all kinds of relativities, in a world in which there is no final security in either theoretical systems or moral laws, and yet a world in which we have a responsibility. But the religious existentialist believes that the "Nothingness" with which he is confronted marks the breakdown of his theoretical systems. Behind it is God, albeit the hidden God; and although he knows that whatever he thinks and whatever he does will have a catch in it somewhere, he can throw himself on the mercy of the hidden God. The secular existentialist has no such final justification by faith. He is left with a responsibility for action and decision, an absolute responsibility, in a world in which there is no security and no centre beyond himself. Hence the secular existentialist is thinking in what are really religious categories of guilt, dereliction, freedom and responsibility; but thinking in them in a world in which he takes seriously Nietzsche's saying that *God is dead.*

Most atheists, he will tell us, have not taken it seriously. They have not realized that they are living in a world which is ultimately meaningless, and yet one in which we have the responsibility of freedom, of decision. They have protected themselves with some philosophy of naturalistic determination or of inevitable progress. And others are not willing to face this lonely responsibility. They cling to clichés and traditional opinions, letting their decisions be dictated for them by the impersonal force of what "they say"—the crowd mind which is in all of us, and which Heidegger calls *das Man.* Heidegger goes so far as to describe Conscience exclusively in terms of the contrast between the voice of *das Man* in us and the readiness of the individual to break with it and make personal decisions for which he takes responsibility. And since such a break always, he thinks, brings a feeling of guilt, the authentic conscience will always be the guilty and not the good conscience.

Conscience is the willingness of the individual to come out from the crowd mind (which includes our normal moral codes) and realize his selfhood in making first-hand decisions.

Some of this language reminds us of the Japanese student who said: "Christian morality no good for go-ahead nation. So hurrah for Self-realization and Thomas Hill Green." But some of the decisions in which modern existentialists realize themselves would make the respectable shade of T. H. Green turn in his grave, as would no doubt also the efforts after self-realization of his Japanese disciple. For whereas to Green and the Idealists self-realization was the

coming to consciousness in an individual of a universal moral will, the existentialist is thrown back on a much more subjective kind of freedom and responsibility. It is a freedom to be found in making decisions which somehow engage our whole nature—but what is our nature, and what are we really like? We can try and discover by a process of deep self-analysis. But we are always discovering in the act of making decisions that we are not really the kind of people we thought we were (Sartre makes much of this point, that we never catch up on our ideas of ourselves). So we are continually frustrated by things inside us as well as outside us. The final frustration is Death, which will defeat our attempts to realize freedom, except (Heidegger suggests) in so far as through facing the fact of death we gain a certain tragic superiority.

So the secular no less than the religious existentialists picture man as being faced with infinite demands which in the nature of the case cannot be fulfilled in the conditions of our finite existence.[1] Sartre says, "l'homme est condamné à être libre", and Kierkegaard said, "Only omnipotence can set people free". Their writings might be taken as series of variations on these two themes. Sartre's long philosophical novel *Les Chemins de la Liberté* is a kind of atheistic existential Pilgrim's Progress. In the first part, *l'age de la Raison,* we see how the chief character, Matthieu Delarue, cannot be free because of his lack of conviction, and his involvements with other people and the sordid muddles which he makes of them.

In the second part *Le Sursis* ("The Respite") we see the effects of Munich on Matthieu and all sorts of other people in France, who had not faced the real possibility of war and were still not facing it. In the part to come, shall we see the discovery of the reality of the War and the Occupation making possible for people some kind of "total engagement" or self-committal? For Sartre is reported to have said, "We were never so free as under the Occupation." He probably meant that in the Resistance Movement people found themselves in situations where the ordinary moral codes failed them, but where they were faced with the need to make difficult and sometimes terrible decisions. And if they had the courage to make them, they discovered something of the possibility of inner "existential" liberty.

[1] Is it unkind to suggest as suitable for an existentialist the epitaph of the Young Lady who always was tired, for she lived in a world in which too much was required?

Existentialism and Moral Experience

What of this existentialist analysis of moral experience? Is the first moral question: "How can I be free?" or is it rather: "What ought I do?" Is there a real difference between the person who is primarily asking himself (in a difficult situation) what ought he to do, realizing that he has obligations to other people, and the person who is primarily asking himself how he can realize his freedom through making a first-hand personal decision? The existentialists are surely right in calling attention to the element of faith and personal decision in any difficult moral situation, particularly when the ordinary sign-posts are down and the ordinary codes fail to guide. But I think the existentialists tend to make the achievement of freedom through decision into an end in itself, so that it tends to become something rather abstract. Thus they sometimes use language which suggests that it does not much matter what you choose, so long as you have the courage to choose and not to rat on it. But a decision is only a responsible decision when it is the outcome of an honest struggle to perceive and know what things we ought to do. There is no text book in which we can look up the answers and we have no assurance that we shall not make mistakes. But I believe that to find the essence of Conscience in readiness to break with the moral traditions and principles of society is only a half truth. It is to identify principles with conventions; and although it may indeed be true that no principles hold absolutely in all circumstances, yet I believe we

hould turn more hairs in breaking them han existentialist views of morality admit, nd only so can we look for growth in noral wisdom. Perhaps this is why Exis-entialism seems more adequate as a phil-sophy of rebellion than of construction; in he days of the Resistance in France, where he qualities called for were courage and he willingness to do terrible things, than ow in the days of reconstruction, where vhat is called for is often honesty and faith-ulness in pegging away at a job of work. Perhaps in this way Existentialism expresses he tortured mind of an age in which to nany people any kind of steady construc-ion or growth seems impossible.

Positive Elements

But I believe that it is more than just his. Existentialists have been right in pointing to the element of faith and per-onal decision in the things which most oncern us in morality and in philosophy. They are also right in bringing out the act that these decisions have to be made n our very ambiguous world, in which here are no ideal solutions, and in which vhatever we do will have snags in it some-vhere. This is part of our finitude, which o the irreligious may spell frustration, and to the religious may be part of what can be called "creatureliness". The religious existentialist acknowledges a claim of the Absolute upon him, and interprets it as the Hidden God; but he knows he must act largely in the dark; and that there are no tram lines and no text-book answers. The secular existentialist interprets the claim as a call of himself to himself to realize responsible freedom in a world in which there is no security and no authority beyond his own decision. Between these two there is a great gulf fixed; nevertheless in contemporary Existentialism a situation has been produced in which believers and unbelievers can talk to one another in terms of common assumptions. For the existential atheism differs from the atheism which often goes along with materialist philosophy, in being a sense of the *absence* of God, an intellectual and spiritual derelict-tion in which it is possible to see a religious value. I believe that there are groups in France where Catholics, Protestants, people sharing the outlook of Martin Buber, and existential atheists can meet and find that they are living in the same perspective and asking the same questions. Possibly some-one who has, as I have not, some knowl-edge of these groups, could write about them for the *Christian News-Letter.*

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE—ALLY OF CHRISTIANITY?

By LEONARD F. THORNTON, JR.

Jean-Paul Sartre is the most controversial figure in post-war literature. His importance lies in the fact that he is a powerful and creative artist within a relatively little known but highly significant philosophical and religious movement. He has done more than popularize existentialism. In the play and the novel he has given it a natural form of expression. Existentialism as a philosophy is acutely conscious of the chasm between philosophy and the non-rational factors in the human situation. The play and the novel by their very nature are existential in that the dramatic element in them requires a tension between rational expectation and irrational events. When this tension is carried to its limits tragedy results. Existentialism is not tragic, however, because it is aware of an inner "logic" in events, or at least seeks this hidden logic. In Sartre's words, it is an attempt to "rediscover the absolute at the heart of relativity itself." [1]

Sartre cannot be explained away as a product of French disillusionment during the war, although the occupation and the resistance had a tremendous effect upon him. His method of writing owes an acknowledged debt to Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Faulkner. His philosophy, far from being provincially European, is closely related to American pragmatism. Even his apparent individualism is saved by an acute understanding of Christian passion, "a freedom which resolutely puts itself into a state *of passivity to obtain a certain transcendent effect by this sacrifice.*" [2] His individualism is further modified by his awareness of the power and reality of, what I would call, the middle-collectives, nation, class, race, and historical group.

[1] Sartre, Jean-Paul, *What Is Literature?* New York: Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 215.
[2] *Ibid,* p. 50.

In its philosophical counterpart, existentialism has occasionally become a rational negation of rationality. On the other hand, in Sartre a religiously constructive element is always apparent in his use of myth. Sartre insists that writing requires a myth. In writing *The Flies,* Sartre has attempted to write his myth. For this reason it is necessary to consider *The Flies* first, even though it is not a typically Sartrean work.

Being an adaptation of the Greek myth of Orestes, *The Flies* is in middle ground between his philosophy and his writing and relates them to each other. In the beginning of the play, Orestes is a "man without a country." As a pupil in the Greek philosophy, this is as it should be, for philosophy raises one above class and clan. But when Orestes discovers that he is the son of the murdered Agamemnon, he is irresistibly drawn back to Argos and the ties of religion and home. "I want to be a man who belongs someplace, a man among comrades." His tutor tries to dissuade him, but in vain. On returning to Argos, Orestes finds his sister Electra the only person in Argos not crushed by the feeling of guilt through complicity in Aegisthus' crime of murdering Agamemnon and marrying his wife, Clytemnestra. Orestes frees the people (in whom he sees little, if any, saving democratic grace) by killing both Aegisthus, the tyrant ruler of Argos, and his own mother. Having taken on the people's guilt in this fashion, he has no alternative but to leave Argos. Over his sister's protests, he departs from Argos announcing, "I am my freedom."

Sartre is accused of writing a literature of despair. In comparison with the Christian myth of salvation through the Cross and

esurrection, there is some justification for is. Orestes leaves no band of disciples to rry out the transformation of society. here is only Electra who remains as the nscience of the collective. But because è does remain and the power of Evil, mbolized by the flies which plague Argos, s been broken, she does represent the lvation of the people of Argos.

It can hardly be a despairing literature at draws Electra with all the humanity d heroism she has in Sartre's play. With ore justice Sartre's myth can be accused of ying on individual heroism rather than saving fellowship. This weakness is perps a virtue when it is realized that the ay was written during the occupation en individual heroism was the only posility for most Frenchmen. Individual istance needed strength in the absence fellowship.

If we turn to Sartre's novels, surely no e can accuse Sartre of lack of sensitivity the void which the lack of fellowship ates. Mathieu's soliloquy in *The Reieve* expresses both the indestructibility man's freedom and the anguish of its er loneliness.

"The church may collapse, I may umble into a shell hole, or drop back nto my life; nothing can rob me of this eternal moment. There had been, and orever would be, that cold glare upon hose stones under the black sky; the absolute, without cause or sense or purpose, without past or future save a gratuious, fortuitous, splendid permanence. 'I m free,' he said suddenly. And his joy hanged on the spot, to a crushing sense f anguish." [3]

tre's sense of fellowship, perhaps it is talgia, is expressed in the relations been Mathieu and Brunet in *The Age of ason*. Mathieu loves and respects Brunet, ommunist, more than any other person. net continually tries to get Mathieu to join the Party. But there is something in Mathieu which tells him that his personal relationship with Brunet is at stake and that Brunet wants him to join the Party so they can continue to be friends. To Mathieu this indicates a weakness in Brunet and in the Party. It is a denial of free fellowship.

In *What Is Literature?* Sartre "explains" the characters in his novels. He says they are problems which address themselves to the freedom of the reader. It is understandable then that Sartre reserves his most difficult character for the religious problem. *The Age of Reason* is well under way before Daniel is introduced. His dual personality of Archangel and pervert is unfolded slowly and subtly. He is damned forever in the eyes of men and in his own eyes and yet he is the Archangel who saves Mathieu and his unborn child by marrying Marcelle to provide the climax of the story. Daniel grows in force as the novel progresses, until at the end he overshadows the main character. At the end of *The Age of Reason,* Daniel seems to be frustrated as a central character. He has been relegated to the prosaic state of what promises to be a more or less happy marriage. Daniel is gentle and handsome, and as he says, "Homosexuals have always made excellent husbands." [4] In short, we are not prepared for the shock of finding in *The Reprieve* that Daniel's purgatory has become a hell. On the verge of suicide since our first introduction to him, he now welcomes the impending war as a release, a socially accepted suicide. The dialectic of his character brings him to a religious discovery of his existence. "God sees me," he writes to Mathieu, "I feel it and I know it."

> "I existed *in the presence* of a look . . . I can easily describe that look: it is nothing; it is a purely negative entity: imagine a pitch-dark night. It's the night that looks at you, but it's a dazzling night, in fullest splendor; the night be-

[3] Sartre, *The Reprieve,* New York: Alfred A. pf, 1947, p. 352.

[4] Sartre, *The Age of Reason,* New York: A. A. Knopf, p. 391.

hind the day. I am flooded with black light; it is all over my hands and eyes and heart, and I can't see it . . . *I am seen, therefore I am.*" [5]

Through Daniel, Sartre is able to speak of God without the tentativity which characterizes his essays. In *What Is Literature?* he only conditionally states his theological position.

> "Man is the being toward whom no being can be impartial, not even God. For God, if He existed, would be as certain mystics have seen him, in a *situation* in relationship to man. He is also the being who cannot even see a situation without changing it, for His gaze congeals, destroys, or sculpts, or, as does eternity, changes the object in itself." [6]

Sartre's atheism is specific in character. He denies the existence of a subjectively unrelated god, as well as an objectified, authoritarian god. In this respect, his position is very close to that of Emil Brunner in *The Divine-Human Encounter.*

We may be tempted to say that Sartre's atheism is a problem of semantics, and, in a way, that is what it is. A public opinion poll would undoubtedly list Sartre among the unredeemed who do not believe in God. (See Charles Kean's article on the Gallup Poll in *Christianity and Society,* Spring, 1948.) If so, he is among the honest unredeemed who see nothing but idolatry in the present category of the religious.

The god which Sartre most explicitly denies is the god of order, the god of existing values. Sartre's Zeus in *The Flies* is such a god. In confronting the free man, Orestes, Zeus has only a conditional power. He even has a certain admiration for Orestes, though in the end he aims a telling blow when he points out that Orestes' freedom makes him "lonely as a leper."

It is not Sartre's atheism which presents a problem to the readers of *Christianity and Society.* Sartre's writings present in the medium of the play and the novel some of the most serious questions with which theology is now struggling. Sartre is a powerful ally for a Christianity that has also made the "decision to re-integrate the absolute into history." [7] He is fighting, as we are, against "a morality with which everybody was familiar but whose principles no one has ever discovered." [8]

A final word about *What Is Literature?* for the preachers among us. It is here that Sartre tackles the problem of the writer directly. He does an admirable job of analyzing the relation of the writer to his public. There is such an obvious parallel here to the relation of the preacher to his congregation that I could not help translating his whole discussion into the church situation. To quote a classmate now in the parish ministry, we are only too often preaching the Christian answer to people who haven't even asked the question. Must not the preacher also ask the question, "For whom does one preach?" Or is it enough to say with another classmate of mine who answered our queries about taking an assistantship in a suburban church by saying, "They are people, aren't they?"

[5] *The Reprieve,* pp. 406–7.
[6] *What Is Literature?* p. 23.
[7] *What Is Literature?* p. 230.
[8] *Ibid.,* p. 202.

THE SECOND FOCUS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

In May 1948 the Fellowship of Socialist ristians became the Frontier Fellowship. the time it was emphasized that the cision to drop the word Socialist implied shift in principles, but that it would ve us an opportunity to express our po- ion without being confused with the kind socialism which has become irrelevant the United States. However, there has en continuous debate on the question the extent to which we should continue, actually do continue, to use socialist eory as the middle term between the ristian imperative and the actual situa- n.

This question was discussed by Paul illich, Eduard Heimann, and Reinhold ebuhr in one of the sessions of the Fall nference (October 17–18, 1949) and the llowing paragraphs will give their main ints.

I.

The second focus of the Fellowship still in some way Socialism; the question is at elements of the Socialist tradition eak to our present situation, and what rd having symbolic power can be found express this emphasis. It may be sig- ficant that Religious Socialists (the Euro- an predecessor and analogue of our oup) understood the word Socialism in much wider sense than it has had in this untry. Socialism was the symbol of a ofound cultural rebirth based on a radical ange of bourgeois-liberal-competitive so- ty into a more proletarian-collective- ited society, a new society transformed all realms. Socialism in this sense im- ied attitudes towards science, philosophy, t, medicine, education, liturgical reform, chitecture, etc., as well as towards eco- omics and politics. It represented a com- ehensive vision of a creative and mean- gful society in which the destructive im- plications of modern industrial technology would be minimized or overcome.

Since Socialism never has had either this meaning or this symbolic power in our country, the word can be dropped as a matter of expediency. However, the broad cultural orientation of the Religious Socialists can be and ought to be taken seriously. In fact, there was among the original insights of this movement a concept which could give our group a second focus.

One of the terms Religious Socialists took over from the early Marx was *Verdinglichung*—making men into things, dehumanization. This concept is particularly relevant to the fundamental problem of our time, which is the question of the relation between creative freedom and community. Dehumanization is a grim reality in our day. We have seen how the Nazis made men into subjectless objects. We see the Russian Communists dehumanizing people—the trial confessions are a case in point. These are obvious examples. Less obvious is the fact that our own culture fosters dehumanization. We are being culturally and psychologically conditioned to fit into a system dominated by monopolistic industrial and financial power. And beyond this, machine technology itself fosters trends toward standardization, impersonality, and the stifling of creative freedom.

The philosophical movement which has attacked dehumanization most vehemently is existentialism. During the nineteenth century Kierkegaard represented the individualistic side, Marx the sociological. Recent forms of existentialism have been decidedly individualistic. Our socialist background, however, teaches us that creative freedom is not possible as an individual element in society. It is possible only in a community whose basic structures promote a creative relationship between the

individual person and society. Today, therefore, we need the analogue of Marx's analysis of and fight against dehumanization, a "social existentialism."

Some contemporary movements in Europe take the problem of creative freedom and community very seriously. One of them is Neo-Liberalism, which stresses creative freedom and not community. Another position is that known as the Third Way, which is not much more than traditional Socialism at present, but which is searching for new insights and new ideas. Concentrating on the specific problem of dehumanization in all of its ramifications, groups like ours should do what these European groups already are trying to do, namely, create something which perhaps could be called "Neo-Socialism."

PAUL TILLICH

II.

Love and justice, if interpreted as purely personal virtues, rebound impotent from the institutions of collective life, which hold power over the human soul. Hence our Christian interest in institutions directly. But are we purely pragmatists, examining and reforming institutions piecemeal, or are we pragmatic socialists, believing that there are in our institutional system structural dislocations (primarily private financial controls) which are dangerous to the economic stability and the social justice of democracy? This latter would be a socialist approach, however undogmatic we may be in applying it.

In its true and original meaning socialism, deriving from *society*, is as opposed to *statism*—total political power, as it is opposed to *economism*—private financial power or its dialectical opposite, proletarian class power. In Marxism, "dialectical" economism becomes a religion of redemption and "proletarian" statism becomes its historical instrument. The final "withering away of the state" into a stateless socialism is a utopian after-thought, and it is perverted because the society of this socialism is made over by the preceding totalitarian state in its own image.

If socialism is to replace present private financial controls, it need not go beyond the sphere of strategic industrial and financial enterprises. In order to keep away from statism, socialism requires a variety of forms (nationalized, municipal, autonomous like TVA or BBC, producers' and consumers' cooperatives) working in a market which is regulated by a few public monopolies (such as credit and steel) with a view to steadying investment and employment. Under this system, by following a deliberate long-range policy which would temporarily shorten the supplies and raise the prices of credit and steel, ruinous fluctuations of the business cycle could be prevented, while at the same time the movement of free economic units in the market would not be disturbed. (Britain and Norway)

The big problem of a socialist economy is psychological. Capitalism uses "the stick and the carrot" as incentives. Can socialism abolish the stick by guaranteeing employment and income, and rely on the carrot alone? Freedom is self-responsibility; it must include the freedom to starve for reasons of personal incompetence and laziness, although certainly not for reasons beyond one's control as in capitalism. Free services, such as those offered in the British health scheme, may be impossible. Token payments must force the public to be economical with these privileges.

The philosophical problem of socialism is to find a foundation for the liberty and dignity of the person which is independent from and superior to institutional policy. The economic interpretation of history says that mankind will achieve its highest destiny through the unification of industry, replacing its private piecemeal operation; and it says that such a unification of industry requires and forces a completely homogeneous, collective, rational interest, in which individual liberties are submerged

irrational. This interpretation is not e. On the contrary, personal liberty st be rooted in the religious plane and posed on society, economics, and the te as a limitation of their institutions. is among the fundamental rights which tice owes every member of the com- nity.

EDUARD HEIMANN

III.

The elimination of the word "socialist" m the name of our Fellowship was indic- ve of the whole spiritual climate of our , not only in America, but also in rope, where the name socialist has more itical significance than here.

Negatively we were forced to drop the ne because socialism is too intimately ntified with Marxism. Though all of re indebted at various points to Marx, s obvious to most of us that modern inism is not merely a corruption of rxism but a natural consequence of rxist illusions. Marx certainly did not nd the modern police state, but he did nd the dictatorship of the proletariat. wrongly asumed that its power would short-lived because he foolishly thought t all human egotism was rooted in the itution of property and imagined that abolition of this institution would dually prompt such socialized conduct all men that the state would wither ay. I think it becomes increasingly r that the intolerable political mistakes Marxism are derived from the errors Marxism as a false political religion, mising man redemption from all evil.

Ve can of course still be socialists even ugh we are not pure Marxists. We st, in fact, be socialists in the sense that must regard the socialization of prop- as one method of bringing great eco- nic power under the control of the com- nity. But we cannot be socialists in the se that we regard the socialization of perty as a panacea for every problem of stice. Insofar as we have come to the conclusion that the socialization of all property must inevitably lead to a too powerful state apparatus, we can obviously no longer be socialists in the dogmatic sense.

In giving up Marxist illusions there is, of course, a danger that we also sacrifice some of the truth which Marxism has taught our culture and our Christian faith. I should like to emphasize two Marxist insights which must distinguish the spirituality of such a fellowship as ours. One is an emphasis upon the social character of human existence and the consequent social dimension of man's redemption. We live in communities and are communal creatures. We must, with classical Christianity, insist upon the reality of the dimension of human existence which transcends the social and political substance of man's life. But we must also reject every secular and Christian individualism which denies and destroys the social substance of human existence; and we must also reject every Christian pietism which promises man "salvation" without reference to the collective fate in which he is involved with all his fellows. Any plan of salvation, for instance, which absolves a Christian from responsibility for seeking justice in the national community and from seeking to give a nascent global community a tolerable peace, must be anathema for us.

Secondly, we must take the political and economic structure of a community seriously and reject the kind of moralism which believes that it is possible to be indifferent to the problem of structure so long as "good" men operate the systems and structures.

Thirdly, we must recognize that, although the "class struggle" is infinitely more complex than Marxism assumed, there is such a struggle. We must, in other words, reject the illusion that any human society is or can be a simple harmony of all interests. We must strive for harmony partly through adequate moral and spiritual resources and partly by achieving the best possible political, judicial, and eco-

nomic structures for minimizing conflict and enlarging the areas of human cooperation.

The recognition of the class struggle means that we also understand the ideological taint in all human conceptions of justice and therefore resist both secular and religious sentimentalism which imagines that there is some easy way of achieving complete transcendence over self-interest. These are negative points of distinction from individualistic, quietistic, moralistic and spiritualistic interpretations of the Christian faith. Positively we must be concerned with the organization of economic and political power so that the structures of society will guarantee the maximum of both freedom and community. This requires that we free ourselves of dogmas and slogans which have solved this problem too simply.

Furthermore, we must be concerned, as Paul Tillich rightly asserts, with the dehumanization of life and the vulgarization of culture which derives directly from the technical character of modern society without reference to its special social organization. We must face the perils which come from industrialism per se, no matter what kind of socialist or capitalist organization society may have.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

OOK REVIEWS

ISTENTIALISM. *By Ralph Harper.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 949. 163 pp.

t is one of the ironical facts in which tory abounds that the very notion which s devised to restrict philosophic specula- n for the sake of faith—the notion of existential self and existential truth as been used or abused, about one ndred years after its first initiation, by a rman thinker who had run away from Roman Catholic seminary to build up a v type of philosophic speculation, which does not oppose faith, at least does not r to it at all. And this irony is under- d by the further fact that this German stentialism has been copied and wa- d down by a French coffee-house eist, who made it the great fashion of day, the philosophie à la mode.

And yet, this whole movement has a seri- implication. As designed by Kierke- rd it was not at all supposed to be a philosophy, but rather a severe attack n speculation arrogating to itself the wer to penetrate into the heart of all ngs and to teach what God and Man the World are. Kierkegaard—in the of Kant, with whom he profoundly eed as his diaries disclose—set out to strict reason in order to make room for h." His passionate mind fought the mpt on the part of Catholic scholasti- n, as well as of secular metaphysics, to nprehend God without God's self-revela- n. Karl Barth is the legitimate and true r of Kierkegaard in this respect.

t is by no means insignificant that idegger had a scholastic background. s doctoral dissertation was a discussion the system of Duns Scotus, with whom has much in common. The anti-Thom- c trend in Duns, his doctrine of the macy of the will, and that of the "in-dividual form" appealed to his intellect as much as to his modern disposition. It is also of some consequence that he was the pupil of Husserl, who himself had been most decidedly influenced by his Roman Catholic teachers, Brentano and Bolzano, and whose idea of the "intentional" function of thought was taken from scholasticism.

Heidegger in a definite way tries to throw out Kierkegaard's revolutionary Christian critique of reason and to reduce it to an anti-Christian scholasticism, to a scholasticism without God. Perhaps nothing can better characterize the existentialism of Heidegger than this inner connection. His whole scheme of thought secularizes scholasticism in a way and to a degree never done before. It represents a most subtle, most consistent, most daring endeavor to build up a system which retains all the insights of Christianity but cancels faith in God and replaces it by faith in Man.

Although Heidegger is too cultivated and too prudent to display his basically atheistic position in the cynical form in which Sartre proclaims it, yet it is this position which gives his thought its nerve and its originality. Never before has an atheism been set up which strove to save almost all spiritual values and all the inwardness of Christian faith and thought, and which put in the place of God the concept of absolute Nothingness. In this the novelty of Heidegger's system consists. It is the boldest "negative theology" ever undertaken, a theology in which the existential nothing, i.e. Death, is in the center.

What is the meaning of life, what is the meaning of existence, of time, of world, of man, of guilt, of history, if Death is the Ultimate?—this is the question raised by Heidegger with an intensity, a clarity, a profoundity and a sagacity never before ap-

plied to it. It is an historical deed, I think, to have put this so simple and so audacious question in the center of thought, and to have answered it in such an elaborate, scholastic, methodical and exhaustive way. This question was due to become central sometime in the course of philosophic development. It could not become central before the rise of Christianity, because Christianity first made death central, though in the form of the death on the cross. And it could not become central either before the decay of the Christian faith which is the signature of our present time.

The book of Ralph Harper presents existentialism in a lucid way. The first two chapters, "The Problem" and "The Experience," introduce the reader into the middle of the new philosophy and exhibit its revolutionary character. I regard these chapters as the most valuable part of the book. The subsequent reviewing dicussions of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre suffer from the impossibility of dealing with the ideas and systems of these men briefly. This is especially true with respect to Heidegger, whose language is quite his own and therefore difficult even for a German to understand. A translation of his book, *Sein und Zeit,* is a desideratum today. I doubt whether the English-speaking reader will get a clear picture of its content through any review.

However, Harper has done a fairly good job. He has rendered prominent the main and most important features of his figures partly in his own words, partly by quotations (I wish he would have always given the title of the book and the pages from which the quotations are taken). I doubt whether the authors he discusses in chapters six and seven—the neo-Thomists: Rousselot, Guthrie and Father D'Arcy—can be called existentialists with the same right as the first three. There are some slight similarities between this new scholasticism and existentialism, but they are not important enough to make these authors existentialists. On the other hand, I wonder why real existentialists like Unamuno (the Spanish Kierkegaard), Jaspers and Marcel (an interesting Catholic thinker), who are not atheistic as Heidegger and Sartre and much more existentialist than the neo-Thomists, are not treated.

RICHARD KRONER

EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHIES. *By Emmanuel Mounier.* New York: Macmillan, 1949. 142 pp.

Three elements form Mounier's book. One is an historical analysis of the philosophers of existentialism, defined "as a reaction of the philosophy of man against the excesses of the philosophy of ideas and the philosophy of things." The second is a study of concepts common to both the Christian and atheistic branches of the movement. The third is the thesis that Sartre and his circle by their idiosyncrasies threaten to bring disrepute upon a type of philosophy which is wider and deeper than their caricature of it. The author's final evaluation is that "rationalism . . . holds a vital message which must be kept alive in the world" and that "if Existentialism can avoid this baroque type of spiritual worthlessness into which some people seem to be driving it, and if it can, without any juggling with words, rediscover the secret of the fulfillment of existence, then it will be able to present a rejuvenated . . . appearance."

The genealogical tree of existentialist thinkers has Socrates, the Stoics, St. Augustine, and St. Bernard for its roots, Pascal and Maine de Biran the bole, and Kierkegaard the trunk. One major branch includes such diverse representatives as Jaspers, Marcel, Soloviev, Chestov, Berdyaev, Buber, Barth, Scheler, Landsberg, Peguy, Bergson, Blondel and LaBerthonniere. The other branch, with Nietzsche appearing something like a fungus, has less healthy foliage with Heidegger and Sartre. Obviously the scheme is much oversimplified when one includes Barth who has repudiated the movement and Berdyaev whose

imary rootage surely is elsewhere. The thor has mistaken the forest for a tree.

Critical analysis of the concepts of man contingency, the impotence of rea-n, the bounding-leap, the instability of an, estrangement, the imminence of ath, solitude, and nothingness is under-ken to prove the identity of the wood in th major branches as against other philo-phical trees despite very real differences the diameter of the wood rings. Kierke-ard, Pascal, and Sartre are the chief men rveyed. There are many excellent flashes interpretation such as the meaning of nscendence in these philosophies, but e analysis is so sketchy that it lacks the wer to convince and often fails to make se. Some of the obscurity that haunts book may be due to the dull axe of the nslator who apparently thinks such anslationese" edifying: "Sartre's nause-d man abandons this straight-out non-se: one single thought for his own wel-e thus hardened into possessable total-ss, is sufficient to convince him of the pidity of it."

WILLIAM J. WOLF

HE ETHICS OF AMBIGUITY. *By Simone de Beauvoir,* (translated from the French by Bernard Frechtman). New York: Philosophical Library, 1948, 163 pp. $3.00.

This is a prolegomena to the sort of eth-l theory which might be constructed the premises of atheistic existentialism. e author, whose work is well known in nce in the field of the novel and play, ites this her first book in philosophy h an acute awareness of the tragic am-guities of the war-time French political uation. She finds that the psychological ights of Kierkegaard and Sartre speak re to the condition of European man n do the traditional ethical schools, cient and modern, Christian or Marxist.

The significant effort of the book is that erecting a positive, "yea-saying" ethic. She counters the popular charges made against existentialism. Ethically it implies neither anarchy, solipsism, nor nihilism. In man's "encounter with nothingness," he must indeed discover that there is no metaphysical or theological support for his values. But though alienated from his world, he need not be alienated from his fellows. The freedom of man is the supreme good, "to treat the other as a freedom so that his end may be freedom" the best precept. The ambiguities involved in the application of this *summun bonum* the author faces with candor and realism, offering no *a priori* solutions but showing up, in a kind of Niebuhrean fashion, the falsity of all pat solutions. The life of the free man, asserting his free existence and preserving the free existence of others over the "facticity" of the world, is never victorious, but the game is worth the playing.

When judging this book from a Christian perspective, one is left with a confused impression. There are points of affinity with historic Christian ethics, and particularly with neo-Protestant thought. For example, man's situation of despair in finitude, as one bound for death, yet capable of self-transcendence. And the ultimate value-premise seems to be really not freedom, but the inherent worth of the personality of the individual, over all "Ideals" or "Causes" or "things,"—this is Christian humanism. Yet the total result is far from Christian. What emerges as a design for living is a kind of eclecticism compounded of Stoicism, Kantianism, and liberal humanism, with the focus of effort shifted from the future to the "moment." The negative diagnosis of the book, in particular the categories of the "sub-man," the "serious man," the "passionate man," and the "adventurer," is much more intriguing than the positive prescription, which seems to this reviewer to be little more than traditional answers parading in the new costume of anguished Sartrean vocabulary.

WALDO BEACH

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF IMAGINATION. *By Jean-Paul Sartre.* New York: Philosophical Library. 1948. 285 pp. $3.75.

THE EMOTIONS: OUTLINE OF A THEORY. *By Jean-Paul Sartre.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1948. 97 pp. $2.75.

The question of existentialism, What does it mean to be a man? is one which has been asked and answered many times, in many ways, by many men in western history. Thinkers as different as Socrates, Augustine, Pascal, and Nietzsche, not to speak of Kierkegaard, address themselves to it. In a real sense the Bible is an existentialist book, as some recent theologians have been forcibly reminding us, for it asks and answers in its own distinctive way the existentialist question. This means that, carefully and critically considered, existentialism can be very useful to us for the exposition and presentation of Christian faith to the present-day world.

For reasons too many and too complex to be reviewed here, the term existentialism and the idea for which it stands have received in recent thought a highly specialized—one may almost say esoteric—meaning. Modern thought and culture have developed in ways that ignore or frustrate many of the important aspects of man's existence as an individual person. It was thus inevitable that the question, What does it mean to be a man?, should be asked once more with a peculiar urgency and poignancy. And considering all the circumstances, it was altogether inevitable that many of the answers should be as we are being constantly reminded, "morbid," "irresponsible," and other unpleasant things. It is to the answers given by Heidegger and his French followers, notably Jean-Paul Sartre, that the term existentialism now applies in the popular mind in this country. The present volumes are two of a greater number published by the Philosophical Library in order to acquaint the American reading public with this philosophic movement. They constitute an effort on the part of Sartre to apply his philosophic assumptions to detailed problems of psychology. He speaks of his psychology as phenomenological psychology, thus differentiating himself from the reigning positivism in that science, and also underscoring his bond to Husserl, who, it will be remembered, was the teacher of Heidegger. Psychology is not, says Sartre, a natural or inductive science but an "eidetic" science. Yet he does not hesitate to use experimental data when it suits his purpose to do so. These two books constitute an investigation from this viewpoint of the fields of imagination and the emotions, both of which are of great and obvious importance for existentialism's analysis of man.

The relation between the detailed facts of psychological analysis and Sartre's philosophy is made clear in the concluding chapter of the *Psychology of Imagination.* Since a good deal of the interest in Sartre, at least in the United States, derives from

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philosophic viewpoint, it would have n valuable to have this chapter much lier in the book. For then the relevance much of the factual analysis would have n much clearer. "What," asks the au- r in the concluding chapter, "are the racteristics that can be attributed to a sciousness from the fact that it is a sciousness capable of imagining? . . . at must a consciousness be in order for o possess the power to imagine?" Now consciousness of objects we assume en- s in existence which correspond in some to the object, but for imagined objects make no such assumption. Imagined ects correspond with nothing in exist- e. It is true that they sometimes possess immediacy of perceived objects; they as Sartre puts it, data of "quasi-observa- ." But the appearance of immediacy wear is actually a projection. Their source is the spontaneity and freedom uman consciousness. We "posit" them, o put it in Sartre's words, to understand gination we must assume that we "posit hingness."

his "nothingness" is a crucial concept Sartre. Readers of *Christianity and So- y* may recognize it as a distant (or close) tive of Tillich's abyss. It is, moreover, basic importance in our awareness of self and world. If the self were im- sed completely in the structures of the ld, it would not envisage nothingness. it would then be in a state of psycho- cal determinism. Its ability to stand r of reality is thus an essential part of pprehension of reality. It is also closely ted to its freedom. At this point Sartre's lysis is similar to Niebuhr's conception man's freedom of self-transcendence. edom for Sartre means just this ability stand apart from reality and unreality. s imagination which enables the self lo this. Imagination is thus not just empirical and superadded power of sciousness; every concrete and real sit- on of consciousness in the world is big imagination as it always presents itself withdrawing from the real."

It is interesting at this point to compare Sartre with St. Augustine, who found imagination also to be a great deep. But St. Augustine, and after him, Reinhold Niebuhr, looked into the void and found God. Sartre finds only the void posited by man. Sartre's *nothing* bears just one resemblance to the Christian God; the vision of it enables man to see the contingency or creatureliness of all his being.

We may note also in Sartre's thought the rigid separation of imagination and reality. For example, we are told that imaginary objects are "outside of the real-outside of existence." From this it is concluded that "the real is never beautiful," and that "Beauty is a value applicable only to the imaginary." So false a conclusion might well lead a man to rework the philosophic assumptions which have led to it. Further, the positive role of imagination in such processes as creative thinking or in seeking the ends of human conduct in morality (not to speak of the religious role of imagination in revelation and faith) are nowhere dealt with. To borrow a phrase from Santayana, imagination supervenes over existence, it nowhere intervenes in existence. All this seems to follow from the dualism of existence and nothingness from which we begin, but it also shows clearly the limitations of this starting point.

A large part of the book Sartre devotes to a detailed discussion of the relation of imagination to the other aspects of human consciousness. The various members of the "image family," portrait, caricature, faces in the fire, spots on the wall, rocks in human form, are seen as functions of the mental image which derives directly from the imaginative power of consciousness. Imaginative projections (mainly pathological) and dreams, as well as works of art, are also analyzed.

The second and shorter of the two books sets forth the outlines of the author's theory of emotions. It begins with an introductory chapter in which positivist psychology

is criticised, and the assumptions of phenomenological psychology are set forth. James' theory, and the similar one of Janet concerning the nature of emotion are criticised. Since they make emotion merely an epiphenomenon of physiological disturbances, they do not account for the organized and active nature of emotion as it is presented to human consciousness.

Psycho-analytic theory is discussed as a psychology of motivation which asks the end or purpose of any aspect of psychic life. This Sartre finds useful; but he adds that much of Freudian psychoanalysis is vitiated by an external and mechanical conception of causation. Such an idea is in flat contradiction to the concept of purpose. It might be pointed out that while this charge does seem to be true of Freud, it is not true of other psychoanalysts who have more consistent views at this point.

According to Sartre's own theory, emotion is always objectively oriented; it is a way of apprehending the world. As man encounters the world he sometimes finds that it is difficult. All ways are barred. No solutions appear. Emotion is the way, the "magic" way, says Sartre, by which the world is transformed, enabling us to deal with it. The dealing consists just in our emotional response to it.

Many questions rise in one's mind in response to such a theory. What of emotion which accompanies successful action? Or more broadly, does this theory correctly construe the relation of emotion to action? Sometimes it is a magical escape. But at other times it is a spur to action, and at still other times it is the accompaniment of successful action. Sartre's theory will take a good deal more exposition and defense than is here accorded it before it is plausible to many of us.

Much of the psychological reading in these books is dull. Whether this quality derives from the state of current French psychology, or inadequate translation, or the quality of Sartre's thought, I am unable to say. But if these books are a sample, Sartre is not destined for any very great influence on American thought.

JOHN HUTCHISON

EXISTENTIALISM. *By Guido De Ruggiero.* New York: Social Science Publishers. 96 pp. $2.75.

Guido De Ruggiero, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Rome, has written a mature and sober evaluation of existentialism. Providing a very condensed summary, he analyses the contributions of Sören Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel. A new dogma is emerging out of the original Kierkegaardian insights. In spite of the view that *existence* must be understood always as subject and never as predicate, the movement has gone from " . . . the singular existent to existence, from its particular anxieties and preoccupations to Anxiety and Preoccupation. . . ." (44–45) Existentialism, in its contemporary period of systematization, is " . . . running waywardly back along its path, banishing existence, by generalizing it, to the limbo of abstractions." (46)

Professor De Ruggiero speaks as an idealist. Man has no " . . . other means of communication with the invisible than the ordinary paths of intelligence." (77) The greatest creator of human values is the reason. (89) Nevertheless, or perhaps as a result of his position, the criticism is effective. While in existentialism it is the paradox that affirms the immediate unity of the contraries of sin and redemption, finite and infinite, time and eternity, and while a dynamic tension is thus created, existentialism fails to mature any connective tissue which would give meaning to the leaps. This failure accounts for the fact that existential thinking seems to end, willingly or unwillingly, with a structureless view of reality. "Transcendence, leap, mystery, all equally depend on the absence of any continuity in the web of becoming, which could arise only from an identical subject

its various moments." (88) It is wiser, Ruggiero believes, in escaping the pitls of nihilism, to assume that there is a . . . true and genuine activity (a force, an petition, a will, a spirit) of which existce is only the manifestation or appearce." (87) When this is accomplished it possible to escape a narcissistic view of rsonality and to provide a better integran of human responsibility. "Thus the rsterious identification of finitude and ilt would be justified in the sense, not at the finite as such is culpable, but that spirit shows itself culpable when it rests the finite, satisfied by its partial realizans, fallings short of the higher aims of ." (90)

While the author of this book has little mpathy with *Existentialism's* profound sp of the tragic character of life, he does derstand something of the Christian ception of responsibility, the durable lity of personality. This book will be very helpful in providing competent criticism of a movement which has itself been most helpful in disentangling Protestant theology from the debris of rationalism.

FRED J. DENBEAUX

A SHORT HISTORY OF EXISTENTIALISM. *By Jean Wahl.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1949. 58 pp. $2.75.

EXISTENTIALISM. *By Jean-Paul Sartre.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1947. 92 pp. $2.75.

Here, in translations from the French, are two views of existentialism coming from the country of its most publicized habitat. Each brief book was originally a single lecture, and is here presented with a transcript of the discussion following its original presentation.

The first, by Jean Wahl, professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne, is both histori-

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cal and critical. The brevity of the lecture itself (which takes only 35 pages of the book) makes it questionable to call it a "short history" of existentialism; but Wahl does present some succinct observations and criticisms of what he analyzes as three stages in existential philosophy: those represented by (1) Kierkegaard, (2) Jaspers and Heidegger, and (3) Sartre. The author recognizes that existential thinking is far older than these recent writers, but wisely concentrates on them. The greatest emphasis is given to Heidegger, a fortunate fact in view of his importance and his obscurity to most Americans.

Wahl refuses to call himself an existentialist, or any sort of "ist"; and some of his criticisms are telling ones. But he clearly sympathizes with many aspects of the recent movement. That it has reached some impasses and difficulties in thought does not disturb him, in view of "the permanence of the dogmatisms" which oppose it and the seminal character of its insights. The discussion at the close of Wahl's lecture includes remarks by six philosophers, including such notables as Nicholas Berdyaev and Gabriel Marcel.

Sartre's book is a translation of his famous lecture, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme.* Sartre undertakes to justify his philosophy against several charges. Most interesting to readers of this journal is his emphasis on the importance of ethical responsibility. Admittedly the philosophy gives little guidance for ethical choice; from Sartre's viewpoint no philosophy can. But it does stress—or over-stress—the importance of ethical decision. As Sartre quaintly puts it, "if I've discarded God the Father, there has to be someone to invent values" (P. 58). So the existentialist labors under the weight of having to invent values for the whole human race. (Incidentally, there is in Sartre a Kantian rationalism, curiously related to the irrationality of existentialism, in his insistence upon the universally legislative will. See pp. 22, 24, 53.) Karl Barth's shafts directed at those who would be Atlases bearing the world on their shoulders find a fitting target in Sartre.

The discussion at the end of the lecture reaches its greatest interest in the clashes between Sartre and M. Naville, a French Marxist. After one follows the extreme insistence upon utter freedom in the existentialist, and the contrary emphasis upon social determinism in the Marxist, the Christian analysis of man's bondage and his freedom takes on a new relevance.

ROGER L. SHINN

ENCOUNTER WITH NOTHINGNESS: AN ESSAY ON EXISTENTIALISM. *By Helmut Kuhn.* The Humanist Library, XI. Hinsdale, Illinois: Henry Regnery Company, 1949. 168 pp. $3.00.

In nine succinct chapters Professor Kuhn has analyzed the historical roots of existentialism and has made some incisive criticisms of its philosophical integrity. As he admits from the outset (p. x), this is not an existentialist essay on existentialism. This is both a gain and a loss for the reader. The gain lies in the rigorous analysis of the central concepts of existentialist thought (estrangement, anguish, despair, crisis, etc.) by one who is not led (as many avowed existentialists are) to define these concepts in terms of other existentialist concepts. The loss is discovered in a somewhat unsympathetic attitude on the part of the writer toward even those fundamental truths which existentialism has rediscovered for our generation. This lack of sympathy leads to certain overstatements, which, to be sure, the main thread of the book corrects, but which must still be deemed to mar this very astute and brilliant essay.

Two of these overstatements might be pointed out. "Modern Existentialism is the quintessence of the nihilistic poison exuded by the ailing mind of Europe" (p. 23), says Professor Kuhn. The context of this statement, as well as the whole essay, demonstrates that either rhetoric or emotion, or both, has carried our author too

And in the chapter entitled "Subive Truth" (Chapter IV), one of the t chapters of the book, the title of the pter itself misstates, I believe, the exisialist view of truth. The analysis bears this misstatement. The author says, ruth [according to Kierkegaard] is subive. It lies in the attitude of the inidual towards an object, not in the ect revealing itself to the individual" (p. . But this surely is not quite correct, the author's following quotation from rkegaard makes clear:

When the question of the truth is aised subjectively, reflection is directed ubjectively to the nature of the indidual's relationship; if the mode of this elationship is in the truth, the individal is in the truth even if he should appen to be thus related to what is not rue.

ierkegaard is here speaking of the relaship of the individual to the object ch he seeks to know, not simply of the ude of the individual toward this ob. "The mode of the relationship" is not same thing as "the attitude." Truth, hort, is subjectivity; it is not subjective. ile one must admit that there are strong lencies towards subjectivism in existenist epistemology, it is wrong to speak Kierkegaard's idea of truth as subjecti per se.

he most constructive part of the book sists in its exposition of the ontology of tentialism. The very apt title of the k contains the gist of the author's criti: existentialism involves an Encounter Nothingness. Christian faith finds its ummation in the encounter with God is the source of all Being and Truth. lern existentialism finds its consummain the encounter with the void result from God's having absented Himself idegger) or in the encounter with the remaining when the nonexistence of has been recognized (Sartre). For the istian, God's Being is revealed when comes to see the nothingness of his own existence apart from God. For the modern existentialist, the existing individual's own being is most positively affirmed in the encounter with Nothingness. This encounter is the travail which brings forth the truly free individual.

The existentialist has completed the disintegration of the Hellenic-Christian idea of contemplation, he has vitiated the idea of passionate love by his removal of the true object of love, namely, God, and he has destroyed the concept of rational faith by the substitution of faith "by virtue of the Absurd" (Kierkegaard), says our author (Chapter V). Professor Kuhn maintains that the idea of ascent (in the manner described by St. Augustine in book X of the *Confessions)* must be held together with the idea of crisis; that the passionate intensity of the life of the "existing individual" is meaningful only when directed toward God as its object; and that rational faith—"the basis of every theory of Being (ontology) as contrasted with a theory of non-Being (mē-ontology)"—must be substituted for faith born in the agony of, and affirmed in the teeth of, despair. This chapter is the most creative section of the book and merits serious study.

The reviewer must admit his incompetence to judge the soundness of the analysis of the historic roots of existentialism, particularly in the sections concerned with Heidegger and Jaspers. But one with only a limited knowledge of the field can recognize that this is an important book, competently and lucidly written, carefully documented, and an extremely helpful guide to an understanding of the philosophy of existentialism.

WALTER HARRELSON

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DECADENTISM, A Study in Existentialism. *By Norberto Bobbio* (translated by David Moore). New York: Macmillan, 60 pp., $1.50.

It is a truism of psychology that there is a strong affinity between attraction and

repulsion. Norberto Bobbio, professor of Legal Philosophy at the University of Padua, is both attracted and repelled by the philosophical development in France and Italy known by the general name of existentialism. He is attracted to it because he himself appreciates the uncertainty of the modern era where all traditions have lost their authority, and he is repelled because, as a follower of Croce, he cannot permit himself a pessimistic view of man and history.

Bobbio has long been one of the best informed men in Italy on the subject of existentialist philosophy. The term itself, as the author realizes, is a weasel word, and he defines it pretty sharply, limiting it precisely to the schools of Heidegger and Jaspers and the literary school of Jean Paul Sartre. He specifically excepts the "religious existentialists" on the ground that their "spiritualism" really qualifies and changes their existentialism so that their resemblance to the secular philosophers is largely superficial.

The term *existentialism* has become a battle cry today on the part of those who take up, pro and con, every new fad in sophistication, and also on the part of those who either find the present historical situation meaningless or who are afraid to face its uncertainty. For the most part the word is very loosely used, and if Bobbio's book should serve no other purpose, it would help by its clear definition of terms. He would limit its use to a definite development from Kierkegaard's thought, particularly his individualism, and also from the thought of Nietzsche. If that which is properly called existentialism has one common denominator, it is "romanticism in reverse."

"This new anthropology, with its religious origin, describes a human situation that is not new, but does not offer the old solution. Guilt knows no redemption, and death no resurrection. The finiteness of man is a beginning and end in itself. Pride does not dissolve into humility, but remains as wounded pride. Existential man never finds the way to earthly salvation. The philosophy of the crisis is the philosophy of the absolute lack of salvation" (p. 24). In these words Bobbio describes the heart of the problem. He goes on—"And what else is the man whom existentialism portrays but a ghost that moves about amid the shadows—because he is a shadow himself—and does not fear death, but rather faces it unflinchingly, because he is himself already dead? For a world of dead men, a philosophy of ghosts" (p. 52).

This reviewer cannot help but feel the mingled justice and injustice of Bobbio's description, and get the impression that he is reading not only a statement of a problem in philosophy but also a moral picture of an author wrestling with his own soul. The Protestant frame of mind, with its emphasis on Justification by Faith and its antipathy to the literalization of religious symbols, finds much that is congenial in the existentialist picture of the human situation. It shares the pessimism of Heidegger and Jaspers, but on a more profound basis, because its appreciation of history is in a larger framework. It would agree with Bobbio that the concentration on one's own suffering may often be morbid rather than redemptive, but the alternative is not a return to authority—not even that of the liberal spirit of Croce—but rather in victory beyond tragedy, in purpose transcending history.

CHARLES D. KEAN

KIERKEGAARD'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. *By Reidar Thomte.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948. 228 pp. $3.50.

It is ironical that Soren Kierkegaard, with his scathing criticisms of regnant philosophies, should have become a major source of a contemporary philosophical fad; and that a writer who disdained the idea of making religion "interesting" should have captivated so many minds in

later generation which has rediscovered
n. But, for better or worse, Kierke-
ard has inspired both profound Chris-
n theology and existential atheism, and
name has become a byword among
ny who know little of philosophy or
eology.

Yet with all the popularity of Kierke-
ard he is still little understood. There
no royal road to mastering his thought,
t the path is becoming easier to follow.
spectacular feat of translation has made
extensive major works available in
glish, in little more than a decade. Now
omte's book offers the first exposition in
rt compass of Kierkegaard religious
ought as a whole.

Thomte attempts no critique of Kierke-
ard but rather "the more modest task
introducing the reader to the religious
ught of Kierkegaard and to his numer-
s writings." For this job competently
ne we may be grateful. The author
ows the Danish sources and uses them
ll. His method is that of summary,
raphrase, and direct quotation. Kierke-
ard's writings, with their variety of style
d subject matter and their literary bril-
nce, do not lend themselves easily to
nmary. But Thomte has managed to
w out the leading ideas, to organize
m (without reducing them to one of the
stems" which the Danish genius de-
sed), and to present them with consider-
able attention to the literary methods which Kierkegaard used. The result is a book which requires rather careful study but does not demand prior technical knowledge.

Perhaps wisely, Thomte gives only the slightest attention to the biographical details which influenced Kierkegaard's thought so thoroughly and which have loomed so large in the writings on Kierkegaard. For this reason it has frequently been suggested that the book be read along with Walter Lowrie's *A Short Life of Kierkegaard* (Princeton, 1942, $3.00). The two books together will be a great help to those who want to understand Kierkegaard. With them a third large and convenient volume, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, edited by Robert Bretall (Princeton, 1947, $5.00) offers a generous sampling of Kierkegaard's own works. Nothing, of course, can take the place of the works themselves, for they are the creation of one of the most clever, provocative, penetrating, disconcerting, and baffling of all writers.

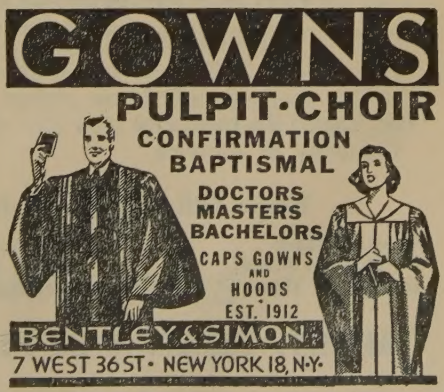
ROGER L. SHINN

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Lack of space has made it impossible to include several reviews of books on existentialism. They will be printed in the Spring issue.

(Continued from Page 7)

t would be ironic indeed if Catholi-
n, which fights for a "family wage" in
industrial portions of the western
rld, were too enmeshed in feudalism in
ly to act creatively in a desperate situ-
on; and if the greatest plutocratic nation
earth thought it necessary to preserve
s sad remnant of corrupt feudalism be-
se the administration feared the criti-
n of wealthy reactionaries. Italy is one
the points in the defence of the west
ere only "revolutionary" change can
n the flood of communism.



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